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SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

February 1, 2020

Get Away with this Great Travel DEAL!

Come to a beautiful rural setting in Tennessee with lovely vistas and near amazing overlooks. Limited time offer for March 1-3 only. Incredible price: 2 nights' lodgings and 3 days of fascinating programs for only $20 pp. Not only that, but you can also get this deal for your significant other!

What is covered? Two nights lodging, meals, programs, and incredible chair

massages. This is an incredible offer! But wait; it gets better. Our special guest is Rev. Dr. Arthur Crilles from California. The programs are selected with you in mind. This wellness and health retreat has everything. You can choose to be part of the Sparkling events or the Still events. You can even go back and forth. It will give you relaxation and renewal so needed this time of the year. Plus, the event will give you a chance to mingle with friends and colleagues.

Come join us for the best event and bargain of 2020. Sponsored by the United Church of Christ Pension Boards and the Southeast Conference United Church of Christ. Learn more on our website.

Hurry before it is too late! **Registration closes on February 21, 2020**.

REGISTER FOR CLERGY RETREAT

Celebrating Black History Month

by Rev. Char Burch, Transitional Conference Minister

Grace and Peace! This month as we celebrate Black History Month, I want to express particular appreciation for our churches that bring us gifts from the African American heritage. Twenty-one (21) of our fifty-four (54) churches described themselves as predominantly African American! As you may know, fifteen (15) of these churches have their roots in the American Missionary Association efforts to start schools across the south for freed slaves following the Civil War. Many of these churches have produced amazing leaders and were at the center of the Civil Rights struggles in the 1960's. Their voices and their actions made a difference then. But they are also making a difference now! (Read all about our AMA history on our website.)

The other six (6) predominantly African American churches, although begun more recently with their own history and heritage, have also been a blessing to us. They have enriched us in understanding through their involvement and their presence.

While we celebrate the African American heritage of those within the Southeast Conference, we must also acknowledge the suffering and pain that is part of it - and which some of our ancestors were complicit.

Unfortunately, racism is very much prevalent in our communities today!

We are a Conference with many voices. Each of us brings a unique perspective to life, to community, to hopes and dreams because of our heritage, our understanding, and our experiences. Each voice adds a greater understanding of what it means to be a child of God, bringing the richness of our different communities.

This is why we seek to have diversity on our Conference Board and Committees as we learn to listen more deeply to each other and reflect more fully the community that God has called us to be.

Thank you to all of you who help us be more aware and more faithful to God's love. Blessings! Char

News from the Conference Office

Annual Yearbook Reporting

It is that time of year again! Yearbook reporting for local churches has opened. Please go to http://www.ucc.org/research_yearbook for instructions on how to submit the yearbook reporting online.

If you have any questions or do not know your church's ID number, please check with the Conference Office. This year, churches that complete the yearbook and survey will be entered into a drawing for prizes by the National Office. We as a Conference are hoping for 100% reporting so we can win a prize!

Please submit your yearbook report by February 29th.

From the Generosity Coordinator

by Min. Carrole Moss, Generosity Coordinator

First and foremost, a huge note of thanks to all of you who have given your contributions, financially or otherwise to support this conference. Because of you, we are able to give back to our communities, our world and to all those in need. We are visible in our communities and our world. We are grateful.

"Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, shall men/women give unto your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." The more you give, the more GOD gives to you...

Thank you, Thank you, Thank You...

We look forward to seeing you and sharing our stories and all of the work that is being done in this conference and and wider churches in the world. Please mark your calendars and plan to be with at Annual Meeting 2020 in Montgomery, AL on June 19-20, 2020. Please bring your ideas, your youth, your love and spirit of making this world a better place.

I'm excited.....and I pray that you are as well. Blessings, as we continue to journey, TOGETHER.

Upcoming Coffees with Char & Heather (Virtual Conversations)

February – Specialized Ministers: How can the Conference support you in

your valuable ministry The ministry of Specialized Ministers touches hundreds of people and the Conference is grateful! This will be a time for you to share your perspectives on ways in which the Conference can provide support to you.

- February 11 (Tuesday) – 10 am Eastern: Register Online
- February 13 (Thursday) – 7 pm Eastern: Register Online

After you have made a reservation, you will receive an email providing you with the link for the connection. If you need assistance making a "reservation" please contact Heather at hfosburgh@secucc.org or 404-719-6572. Come and join with your colleagues in conversation!

Seeking Nominations (Volunteers!) for Conference Leadership Positions

by Rev. James Harris

"We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness." Romans 12:6-8

Are you looking for ways that your unique gift can be used? Perhaps serving on the Board of Directors for the Southeast Conference is just what you have been searching for! We are looking for leaders willing to help guide and serve, as we do God's work within our Conference. If you have the desire and willingness to bring your gift of leadership, compassion, generosity, and teaching as a way of ministry, please email me at james@cookevilleucc.org.

Southeast Conference Annual Meeting

The theme of our 2020 Annual Meeting is "*Reflecting on Our Past: Focusing on Our Future.*" Please join us from June 19-20, 2020 at Community Congregational UCC in Montgomery, Alabama. Watch for the exciting details. Registration will open later in February.

Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2020. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

Week of February 2

- Safe Harbor Family Church UCC; Flowood, Mississippi
- Dwight Andrews
- Robin Lee Fitch
- Gail McGill
- Jodi Yarini

Week of February 9

- Garden of Grace UCC; Columbia, South Carolina
- Thomas Eckert
- Susan Mitchell
- Helen Smith
- Patricia Greeves

Prayer Concerns

- Please hold Atlanta chaplain **Rev. Michelle Holtmann** in prayer due to the recent passing of her mother.
- **Min. Carrole Moss** is thankful for those who have been praying for her during as she recovers from a medical procedure.
- We celebrate with **Pilgrimage UCC** in Marietta, GA as they welcome their new settled pastor **Rev. Courtney Jones**

on Sunday, February 2, 2020.

Churches in Transition

Central Congregational, Atlanta, GA; First Congregational, Savannah GA; Trinity Congregational, Athens AL; Peace Church, Clemson SC

News from the Wider Church

Get Engaged in the 2020 Elections

2020 has been off to a tumultuous start. This election year promises to bring uncertainty and challenge. In these times it is important to take stock and make a game plan. How do we as people of faith want to engage with the elections?

The United Church of Christ General Synod has affirmed the idea that our faithful and civic lives are inextricably linked and who we are as a country, and how we care for the most vulnerable among us is, "an expression of our love for God and all whom God has created." That, "The God of love is also the God of justice. The two are related, for in the Bible justice is the social form of love." [Twenty-fifth General Synod, For the Common Good]

Join with the UCC's Our Faith Our Vote campaign to get more resources on how your congregation and community can participate in the 2020 election season.

Reimbursing Employees for Health Premiums

Under the Affordable Care Act, it is not legal for a company (church) to reimburse an employee for health care insurance premiums. The IRS issued guidance on this in 2013 that was revised in 2015 to give some relief to smaller organizations (less than 50 employees) that engaged in this practice. That relief has now expired, and a company can incur a significant fine if it reimburses health care premiums to employees. Read more on our website.

The Climate Crisis and the Church

Written by Brooks Berndt, Minister for Environmental Justice for the UCC, *Cathedral on Fire | A Church Handbook for the Climate Crisis* explores how the church can combat climate change and protect the environment and our earthly cathedrals. Shipping March 25. Order now from UCC Resources.

News from our Local Congregations

Amistad Murals Return to Talladega College

by the Associated Press

A historically black college affiliated with the United Church of Christ in Alabama is unveiling a new home for murals that depict a famous revolt by African captives aboard a slave-trading ship more than 180 years ago. Talladega College on Friday dedicated a new museum that holds paintings which illustrate the story of the Amistad mutiny.

Commissioned by the college in 1938 and painted by artist Hale Woodruff, the murals hung in the campus library for nearly seven decades until they were removed for restoration and a national tour in 2008. Worth about $50 million, according to the college, the three paintings will now be the centerpiece of a new campus exhibit.

Read more: https://apnews.com/ec88d07eb2078bb4ad34de6d098d84c5

Video from Talladega College Celebrating the Return of the Amistad Murals and Opening of the Dr. William R. Harvey Museum of Art.

Alabama Interfaith Power and Light Legislative Day

Alabama Interfaith Power and Light's Legislative Day is February 4, 2020 and the organization will be occupying the Alabama Public Service Commission. They will also be delivering their Interfaith Energy and Equity Statement (IEES) with signatures representing 31,800 individuals. The Environmental Justice Ministry of the United Church of Christ has signed on; the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ has signed on; and, you can sign on too! Join AIPL on February 4th at 10 AM to let the PSC know that we are now ready to hold them accountable to the people of

Alabama, not profit. Sign on to the statement today!

Fairfield Glade Church Supports Animals in Australia

Members of Fairfield Glade Community Church gathered on January 14, 2020 to make pouches for orphaned and injured animals of the recent bushfires in Australia. The pouches are being delivered to the Animal Rescue Collective Craft Guild for Australia.

Mural Dedicated to Rev. Joseph E. Boone

On Monday, January 27 Atlanta city leaders unveiled a mural honoring Rev. Joseph E. Boone. Known as the "picketing preacher," Rev. Boone was the pastor of Rush Memorial Congregational United Church of Christ for over 20 years. He was an important member of the Atlanta Student Movement, which led to the integration of lunch counters and department

stores in Atlanta. In the 1960s, Rev. Boone was appointed by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as chief negotiator for Operation Breadbasket, a program of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference that urged local businesses to hire, promote and fairly treat black employees.

American Music: A Mirror or Mirage of the American Experience?

The 2020 Dabney Adams Hart Lecture at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Gerogia will feature Rev. Dr. Dwight Andrews with "American Music: A Mirror or Mirage of the American Experience?" Rev. Andrews is the Senior Pastor at First Congregational Church of Atlanta. The lecture will be on Thursday, February 6 at 7:30 p.m. in Evans Dining Hall. Parking is available at 137 S. McDonough St, Decatur 30030. For information email music@agnesscott.edu.

Training and Learning Opportunities

Boundary Training for 2020

We have scheduled several date so that it is convenient for you to attend this training. After all, it really is **MANDATORY!!!**

Please check our website for dates, pricing information, and locations. We have tried to make it convenient for ALL to be able to attend. Registration is open now. We have scheduled dates, times and locations that we hope are convenient for you. Please note that we will have training at our Annual Meeting in Montgomery, AL on June 18, 2020.

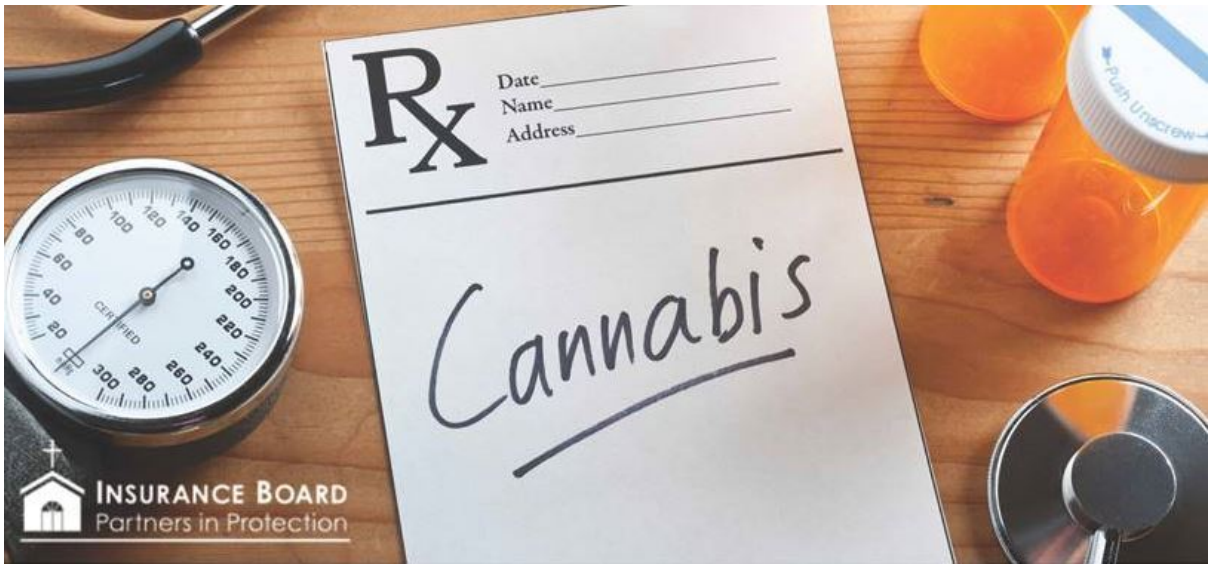
Ministry is hard work. We all need directions to navigate this course. Please make plans to be a part of this most important conversation. We promise, It will be worth your while, and it is MANDATORY!!

We look forward to seeing you soon...at a location near you. **By the way, did we tell you that this training is MANDATORY???** :-)

UCC Clergywomen's Leadership Event

Bold Vision: Leadership in Challenging Contexts
May 12, 2020—May 14, 2020
CIVANA Wellness Resort and Spa in Carefree, Arizona

Authorized ministers and MID's are invited to join for a time of connection, replenishment, learning and strategizing. Our gifted 2019 Antoinette Brown recipients The Rev. Liddy Barlow, The Rev. Eileen Norrington, The Rev. Marty Baumer, and WomanPreach, Inc! will be sharing with us during our time together. Click here for more details and registration.



Medical Marijuana and Employment Practices

Join Insurance Board at the City Club of Cleveland for our first ever Live Webcast Event, Medical Marijuana and Employment Practices.

More Americans are using medical marijuana therapeutically than ever before. As the laws surrounding medical marijuana continue to evolve, there are proactive steps you can take now to protect your church, business, or nonprofit. To learn more, register to attend the event in person or view the live webcast sponsored by Insurance Board.

Candler School of Theology TheoEd Talks

Candler's program in public theological education is partnering with First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta to present TheoEd Talks, an ecumenical speaker series where leaders in the church and the academy share "the talk of their lives" in 20 minutes or less, aimed at sparking conversations that affect the way people think about God, religion and the power of faith to change lives.

The event will feature Episcopal priest and womanist biblical interpretation scholar Wil Gafney; Plywood People founder and "Love or Work" podcast hosts Jeff and André Shinabarger; Catholic priest and scholar-activist Bryan Massingale; and therapist and "The Liturgists" podcast co-host Hillary L. McBride. Purchase tickets here. First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta is located at 1328 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, GA 30309.

Get the full list of upcoming events at Candler here. Watch previous TheoEd talks online.

Festival of Homiletics Returns to Atlanta

The 28th annual Festival of Homiletics will be returning to Atlanta, May 18 to 22, 2020. This year's theme is "Preaching a New Earth: Climate and Creation" and it will feature Bill McKibben, UCC Associate General Minister of Justice & Local Church Ministries **Traci Blackmon**, Ellen F. Davis, and pastor of Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ **Otis Moss III**.

This Festival will draw more than 1,200 colleagues for preaching, worship, and dialogue to help attendees develop a hands-on way to engage creation and climate for their own ministry context. Other speakers include Johnathan Wilson-Hartgrove, Raphael Warnock, Carmen Agra Deedy,

Raquel Lettsome, Anna Carter Florence, and many more. Make plans for this incredible learning experience with top teachers. Register today to get the early-bird discount!

Conference Calendar

Coffee with Char and Heather (Virtual Event)
February 11, 2020 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EST (online)

Coffee with Char and Heather (Virtual Event)
February 13, 2020 @ 10:00 am - 11:30 am EST (online)

Commission on Ministry Meeting
February 20 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm EST
Online Virtual Meeting

Board of Directors Meeting
February 28 - February 29
Pilgrimage UCC, Marietta, GA

Southeast Conference Clergy Retreat
March 8-10, 2020
DuBose Retreat Center, Monteagle, TN

Commission on Ministry Meeting
March 19 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm EDT

Board of Directors Meeting
April 2 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EDT

SEC Annual Meeting
June 19-20, 2020
Montgomery, AL

National Youth Event
July 22-25, 2020
Purdue University, IN

View the **full calendar** of events online: https://www.secucc.org/events/

Contact Us

Conference Minister: **Rev. Char Burch;** cburch@secucc.org

Assoc. Conf. Minister: **Rev. Heather Fosburgh;** hfosburgh@secucc.org

Generosity Coordinator: **Min. Carrole Moss;** cmoss@secucc.org

Director of Communications: **Don Harris;** dharris@secucc.org

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